

VZCZCXRO9188
RR RUEHRG
DE RUEHBR #0012 0041859
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 041859Z JAN 07
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7760
INFO RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 3630
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 8938
RUEHRG/AMCONSUL RECIFE 6069

UNCLAS BRASILIA 000012

SIPDIS
SIPDIS

OES/ENV FOR HHFINMAN, JTHOMPSON
OES/PCI FOR LSPERLING
STATE PLS. PASS TO EPA FOR CAM HILL-MACON

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [SENV](#) [AORC](#) [EMIN](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [KSCA](#) [BR](#)
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE INSTRUMENT FOR BRAZIL MERCURY REDUCTION PILOT
PROJECT

Ref: (A) TELCON OF 12/12/06; (B) TELCON OF 01/03/07

¶1. At a December 8, 2006, meeting at Brazil's Ministry of the Environment, ESTH Counselor Patricia Norman, Science Officer KG Moore and EPA Project Leader Dr. Luis Fernandez met with Dr. Marilia Cerqueira, Director of Brazil's Mercury programs. Dr. Fernandez presented to the Brazilians the scope and proposed planned activities for the Mercury Reduction in Artisanal Mining Project.

¶2. Background Note: Brazil is the leading producer of gold ore in Latin America, the majority of which is produced using a mercury amalgamation process that results in an estimated 130 tonnes of mercury released into the environment annually. EPA is seeking, in partnership with Brazil's Ministry of the Environment, CETEM and UNIDO, to develop a pilot project to encourage the use of mercury reduction technologies among artisanal gold miners and gold shops. End of Note.

¶3. This project had been the topic of earlier meetings at the Ministry. The issue of whether a MOU or other type of instrument would be required to govern this activity had been raised intermittently by the Brazilians. At the December 8 meeting, Marilia Cerqueira made a plea for some kind of instrument to "bless" this activity. Cerqueira said the Ministry felt uncomfortable working without the endorsement of the Brazilian Foreign Ministry.

¶4. Post suggested the possibility of exchanging letters of cooperation, under the authority of the Common Agenda for the Environment. The letters of cooperation could be signed by both the U.S. and Brazilian foreign ministries granting authority to the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment and EPA to execute the Mercury Reduction in Artisanal Mining Project as mutually agreed. (A speedier alternative, if acceptable to the Brazilians, would be to have letters signed only by EPA and the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment.) Cerqueira agreed to consider the exchange of letters.

¶5. An electronic version of the Common Agenda for The Environment agreement, signed by the United States and Brazil in 1995 will be sent to OES/ENV and EPA via email.

¶6. Post seeks OES/ENV and EPA perspectives as to whether the exchange of letters of cooperation could be an acceptable alternative to the Ministry's request for a MOU. If this is a viable alternative, Post would request OES/EPA develop draft text.

SOBEL